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COMMENT ON THE 24 MAY PRAVDA EDITORIAL
"ON THE INTERNATIONAL SITUATION"

PRAVDA'S latest major analysis of the international situation, occupying the entire front page of the 24 May issue, reflects the Kremlin's concern over the forthcoming Big Three conference in Bermuda. It is aimed at exacerbating U.S.-U.K. differences and at undermining the possibility that the Western powers will form a united front in opposition to the Soviet Union on outstanding issues. Calm and reasoned in approach, it is calculated to appeal strongly to elements in the West desiring accommodation with the USSR and distrustful of American foreign policies.

The editorial harks back to President Eisenhower's statement of 16 April on the possibility of solving international problems which, it says, was received as a peace gesture. It then points out that the President's 20 May speech did "not contain even a trace of his peace gesture, not to speak of deeds to support it."

A very large portion of the editorial is devoted to a discussion of Churchill's speech before the House of Commons on 11 May, a speech which reflected "the yearning of the British people for peace", supported the position of the Soviet Government in many ways, and revealed differences with the stand of the United States. PRAVDA quotes with approval Churchill's general statement on the possibility of solving the problem of combining the security of Russia with the freedom and security of Western Europe, and then progresses to specific issues.

On Korea, PRAVDA reiterates the view that the Communist proposals, particularly those of 7 May, form the necessary basis for a truce. Churchill's support of the Sino-Korean proposals is cited with approval. Attlee, a number of members of the House of Commons, and Prime Minister Nehru of India are all mentioned as strongly opposed to the handling of the truce negotiations by the U. N. command. Although PRAVDA'S treatment of Korea contains a transparent effort to promote opposition to the attitude shown by U.S. negotiations at Panmunjom, it raises no new obstacles to settlement. This is in line with recent behind-the-scenes diplomatic approaches by the USSR aimed at promoting successful armistice negotiations.

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PRAVDA agrees with Churchill that Germany is "the pre-dominant problem of Europe", but finds his speech not indicative of a true desire to solve the problem. First, the Prime Minister failed to mention the Yalta and Potsdam agreements, which constitute the basis for "a real settlement of the German problem." Second, he found it necessary to recall the "notorious Locarno Treaty of 1925" -- one of the most important factors which prepared the second World War -- in connection with a German settlement. Third, he oriented British policy towards consolidating a divided Germany. Thus he sacrificed the creation of a "united, democratic, peace-loving Germany" to certain agreements designed to remilitarize Western Germany.

No change is visible in the previous uncompromising Soviet position on Germany in PRAVDA'S treatment of the question. The Potsdam agreement remains the sole basis for settlement, and it seems clear that under present conditions Moscow must consider the German problem not negotiable. PRAVDA also repeats some of the previous Communist appeals to the German people in stating that any peace arrived at must not hinder Germany's economic revival.

As regards Austria, PRAVDA again places the onus for failure to reach agreement directly upon the West. PRAVDA makes the point that agreement had almost been reached on an Austrian treaty when the Western powers worked out the abridged treaty. The only obstacle mentioned remaining in the path of Austrian settlement is this abridged treaty, "which grossly trampled the rights of the USSR, as well as the democratic rights of the Austrian people."

PRAVDA discusses at some length Churchill's failure to mention Communist China in his speech. It points out that Labor leader Attlee, on the other hand, favors admitting Communist China to the U. N. Security Council. Such action, together with a general settlement of Sino-British relations, would serve the real economic interests of Great Britain. Here PRAVDA strikes an indirect blow at U.S.-sponsored trade controls.

Churchill's remarks dissociating the "hand of Moscow" from the liberation movements in Asia are quoted with approval. PRAVDA recommends the extension of the understanding of this

"fact" to other western leaders, as a means of easing the settlement of international issues.

On conclusion, PRAVDA finds Churchill's speech and his appeals for the settlement of at least some of the chief issues "quite realistic." It appears to approve of his suggestion that a high level conference of the minimum number of powers possible take place without delay, and that it be "closed and secluded." Particular point is made of the fact that Churchill, "unlike the statesmen of the West", fixed no preliminary conditions for such a conference.

On the other hand, the 13 May statement by the U. S. State Department revived the concept of preconditions and opposed Churchill's proposal for a "restricted conference." The USSR was asked in this statement to do something about Korea and Austria, when it is "quite obvious" that it is the U.S. and U.K. which have not given their "just share" in either case.

PRAVDA finds that the cold reception given in the U. S. to the position of British leaders on world issues is explained by growing economic contradictions between the United States and Britain.

The Soviet people, according to PRAVDA, viewed with interest some of Churchill's constructive ideas. In this connection, their wariness has been aroused by the proposed conference at Bermuda. In Soviet eyes, this looks like another effort to reach an agreed Western stand at the expense of the USSR. By participating in such a meeting, Churchill will have rejected in spirit, at least, the broader conference he had earlier proposed. In effect, PRAVDA serves notice that the USSR will not participate in any conference which the West approaches with "preliminary fixed demands." Any agreement reached by the West at Bermuda will "bring about a further heightening of the tension in international relations."

The USSR is said finally to be willing to examine seriously any proposals "directed at securing peace and the widest economic and cultural connections between states." Here PRAVDA appears to be suggesting that provided that the results of the Bermuda meeting do not preclude a Big-Four conference, the most promising first step towards the solution of the difficult issues discussed earlier might be taken in the spheres of cultural or economic relations.